

## I. Overview

The Secretary's greatest asset in fulfilling the mission of the Department is its workforce. In order to truly take advantage of one of the most remarkable periods of transformation in the Department's history, our organization needs to reinvent the way it executes its mission. This demands a focus on our internal processes and the methods for how we embrace change within the Department. With the same aspiration and inspiration that President Obama invoked among the populace for change during his first presidential campaign, we believe our efforts can empower each employee to look differently at the way they work and, therefore, significantly increase our effectiveness, even in these difficult times. Here, we define new approaches that build on the success of the last four years and describe our vision of employee empowerment and engagement in order to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce of problem-solvers.

In 2010 the Department began its innovation efforts, as part of the Open Government initiative, by building momentum to advocate for transparency, collaboration, and participation. The Secretary's Innovation Council became a fulcrum for the lever of change by encouraging dialogue, exploring risk-taking and rewarding employees that were passionate about innovation. Through the Council and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer a number of new innovation programs and initiatives have been launched, such as the Secretary's Innovation Award program (HHS*innovates*), which has led to the creation of more than five hundred staff-led innovations, and the Health Data Initiative, through which our efforts to unleash data have spawned numerous new products and approaches to improving public health, health care and the delivery of human services, both inside and outside the walls of government.

We are now building on these successes through several new strategies that function as jumping off points for change to enhance the quality and value of our services, improve the productivity of our workforce, and boost employee satisfaction. Our focus is not just on empowering today's workforce but also to help nurture the next generation of HHS leaders and build a workplace culture that will attract the best and brightest minds and to transform how health and human services are provided.

As a measurement of our overall progress towards this goal, we believe every HHS employee should have the opportunity to answer in the affirmative the following three conditions regarding their workplace environment:

- I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better
- I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things
- Creativity and innovation are rewarded

These are established metrics that are collected each year through the *Office of Personnel Management's Federal Viewpoint* survey. They are used by the Partnership for Public Service

in assessing an organization's innovation index and we believe these statements are a good starting place to measure the pulse of innovation among our employees.

We have identified five guiding principles for enabling this transformation:

1. Frictionless collaboration is central to enhancing peer support, building networks and enabling effective knowledge transfer
2. New methods for problem-solving are an imperative if we are to fully capitalize on employee talent
3. Entrepreneurship and experimentation should be supported and encouraged by management
4. Innovation can be fueled with open partnerships that leverage communities beyond the Federal government
5. Objective measures of results can provide a compass for better decision-making and iterative learning

In the sections that follow we detail the role of our office in enabling this change, each of these guiding principles, the projects we are executing on to embed them into the culture, and some metrics we will use to measure the success of our efforts.